

North West Sutherland Schools Parent Council
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday 10th November 2021, 6pm via Microsoft Teams

1. Welcome

Sophie Beveridge, chair, opened the meeting.

Attendees

Graeme Smart, Iona Shaw, Carol-anne Forsyth, Leanne McKee, Linda Tebay, Denise MacDonald, Heather Paterson, Sally Czerwik, Sophie Beveridge, Joshua Keitany, Yvonne MacRae, Diana Morrison, Ashley Milne, Katy Lee, Krysha Davis, Aileen MacDonald, Selena Campbell, Alison Watt

Apologies

Tanya Morrison

2. Minutes of last meeting

Approved by Sally Czerwik, seconded Carol-anne Forsyth

3. Matters arising from minutes

Sports for Champions will visit Kinlochbervie on Tuesday 23rd November to inspire pupils and encourage resilience and determination. This year their visit will include Chris Bennet, a hammer thrower who has competed at the Olympics and Commonwealth Games. Durness and Scourie Primary school pupils will travel to Kinlochbervie to join Kinlochbervie Primary pupils for a morning session. All primary pupils will return to their own primary school for lunch and the afternoon. The High School pupils will have their session in the afternoon. Pupils are asked to wear sports clothes and kindly contribute £1 each.

4. Purpose of parent council

Opportunity to discuss and question general school / nursery issues with school management. It is not for child or teacher specific issues. Teachers are happy to discuss individual issues with parents anytime.

5. Head Teacher's Reports

Please find the Head Teacher's reports for the High School by Graeme Smart, Primary Schools by Katy Lee, and Nurseries by Aileen MacDonald attached as an appendix. These reports were discussed. High School pupils should be reminded to wear their masks while at school, including when collecting their lunch.

6. Nurseries

a. Durness

Linzi Montgomery will join Durness nursery as an Early Years Practitioner, replacing Tia Keith. It is hoped Linzi will start on 6th December.

b. Kinlochbervie

Aileen MacDonald is happy to answer any questions parents may have about the recent Care Inspectorate report and article in the Press and Journal. It was stressed the inspection was a four hour snapshot in time and there is

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dispute about how it was conducted. There is no concern over how the children are cared for.

Concerns were raised for staff welfare and whether support will be available for them. The Highland Council Quality Improvement Team and Highland Council Senior Nursery Management have both offered their support.

Graeme Smart expressed his complete confidence in and support for Aileen as nursery manager and Leanne, Gladys and Kerry as the staff in the centre. The children are happy and very well supported at all times.

c. Scourie

Graeme Smart and Aileen MacDonald met with Hayley Brown, the Highland Council Senior Manager for Early Years, to discuss whether Scourie could continue with the current Early Years set-up with nursery and Primary 1 pupils in the same classroom. The decision to withdraw this arrangement over the Highland Council area is for financial reasons and not educational reasons. Aileen MacDonald is gathering data on figures and projected pupil roll to prove it will be less financially viable in Scourie to relocate nursery or build a third classroom than it would be to continue with the current model. The projected pupil roll in Scourie at present indicates the school will increase from a 1.5wte teacher school to a 2wte teacher school in future years. A final decision has not yet been made.

7. Primary Schools

a. Durness

Nothing to report.

b. Kinlochbervie

Nothing to report.

c. Scourie

Clarity was sought on whether the traffic calming measures outside the school are going ahead or not. It is thought that the Scourie Community Council rejected the initial proposal as they thought it may cause accidents. The Scourie Community Council will be asked for an update.

d. Altogether days

Nothing to report

8. High School

Staff were asked if the current S2 pupils will choose subjects in Spring for next year or whether they will have to wait until the end of S3. This will need to be discussed in greater detail with staff, pupils and parents before a final decision is made. Both models have now been tried in the school. Choosing subjects for S3 has meant some teachers have to teach S3-6 in a single class with mixed level classes of National 4 up to Advanced Higher being taught at the same time. This is a significant challenge.

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There can be two or three years of broad general education before choosing subjects. Parents at the meeting felt two years of broad general education was their preferred choice.

9. Treasurer's report

Durness Primary School	£1175.55
Scourie Primary School	£284.63
Kinlochbervie Primary School	£650.00
Kinlochbervie High School	£667.10
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Total	£2777.28

10. Fundraising

Highland Council Covid position statement clearly states that there should be no pupil gatherings or organised school events out with school. Schools cannot take pupils to events outside of the school environment or invite parents / public to organised events. As such, school fundraising events are not allowed.

Fundraising opportunities that do not require an event were considered:

Scourie - Iona Shaw has offered to do another 50:50 club raffle. Carol-anne Forsyth offered to arrange another Christmas Hamper.

Kinlochbervie - Denise MacDonald thought parents would arrange another Christmas Hamper and they would likely go ahead with Christmas Post if a premises for sorting the mail can be arranged.

11. Correspondence

A thank you card was received from Christine Mackenzie for her Highland Stoneware gift.

12. Any other current business (AOCB)

Due to the revised Highland Council's Covid position statement the school photographer is not allowed to visit school. Parents discussed whether a photographer could be arranged out with school time and use village halls.

Children In Need fundraising will happen in the High School on the afternoon of Thursday 18th November. Pupils are invited to come as themselves / wear non-school uniform and are kindly asked to donate £2 each. Heather Paterson and senior pupils are arranging an afternoon of fun activities.

Christmas Jumper Day for Save the Children will happen on Thursday 9th December, pupils are kindly asked to donate £2 each and wear a Christmas jumper.

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Scott MacRae, the new Active Schools Co-ordinator, will continue with Mondays in Durness and Scourie, and Tuesdays in Kinlochbervie. However, he will change the timing of his visits to cover extended morning breaks, lunch times and after school activities. He will be asked if he can run or organise taster sessions for gymnastics and other sports in the area.

Sophie Beveridge encouraged any parent with a child who would be keen to start gymnastics classes to contact Ullapool Leisure Centre as they will consider putting on an additional class at a time which the NW pupils could travel to if there is demand. Current gymnastics class is Tuesday at 3.45pm in Ullapool and therefore not possible for our pupils to attend.

The Parent Council are happy to continue with virtual meetings for the foreseeable.

13. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 23rd February 2022 at 6pm via Microsoft Teams

Meeting close 7.35pm

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Appendix 1: Head Teacher's Reports

NSSS Primaries

Parent Council Meeting : November 10th

Durness, Kinlochbervie and Scourie Primary Schools

Changes in staffing

No changes in staffing in Durness/Kinlochbervie. Mrs Karen Wade has joined Scourie Primary (early years) to replace Mrs Hutchison. We are delighted to welcome Mrs Wade to both Scourie Primary and our NWSS staff. Mrs Wade is an experienced teacher with a strong interest in outdoor education.

Teaching and Learning

There has been a lot of seasonal learning activities in all our primaries with Hallowe'en and Bonfire Night. All schools have been learning about Climate Change and the Cop 26 Summit. This has fitted in very well with our Rights Respecting Schools work.

We have been sharing key assessment tasks for literacy and numeracy on Seesaw with parents. Last term the assessment focus was Literacy (talking and listening) and Numeracy (place value). We are trialling sharing the assessments via Seesaw with parents this year and will survey parents later in the year about this. The assessment sheets have a space for pupil voice (completed in school) and parent voice which can be added as a comment below the assessment. This term the assessment tasks are Literacy (writing) and Numeracy (multiplication and division).

Active Schools Co-ordinator

Mr Scott Macrae is visiting all primaries as our new active schools co-ordinator. This has been very well received by all the children. Mr Macrae will visit Durness/Scourie on Mondays and Kinlochbervie on Tuesdays. He will be providing games sessions at break/lunchtimes and after school depending on what timings best suit each school.

Altogether Days

Learning and teaching for our altogether days is regularly shared on Seesaw for parents. There is also a link on each primary schools' website to a selection of photos for each week. This is currently being updated.

We are looking forward to a busy term ahead with a Children in Need event...Sports for Champions visit...Christmas Jumper Day amongst other things being planned.

Christmas Activities

The current Covid position statement from the Scottish Government continues to have an impact on what we can/can't do. However we are working on a number of events within the current guidelines and have been sharing these with parents to get their input too.

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NWSS ELC & SAC

Report for Parent Council

November 2021

Staffing

The current situation is:

Durness – Klara & Kristina are covering the vacant hours, along with Ellen Parker, until the newly appointed EYP, Linzi Montgomery, is able to start. I would like to thank them all for their flexibility.

Scourie – Selena is the early years practitioner Mon – Thurs, with Linzi Montgomery due to be covering on a Friday. Selena & Linzi will be supported by Krysha Davis & Karen Wade as Scourie is an Early Level class.

KLB – remains with Leanne & Gladys as the early years & school aged childcare practitioners from Monday – Friday, with Kerry working for 2 hours daily Monday – Thursday in the support worker role.

Care Inspectorate report - KLB

Some of you may have read the article in Tuesday's P&J about the Care Inspectorate report that was published in early October. As a management team, there are many points within the news article and full report that we disagree with and does not truly reflect the practice we observe in KLB Nursery. We accept that there are areas for improvement, particularly within paperwork, but much of this has been reviewed and alterations have been implemented. However we still have concerns with the manner of the original visit and will be sharing this with the appropriate authorities.

Durness is the next setting likely to have a Care Inspectorate visit as it a new registration, with Scourie likely to be later in the year.

COVID

Covid continues to have a daily impact on our settings and will influence how each setting celebrates Christmas. Unfortunately, the latest position statement has forced us to cancel our ASG visit to the pantomime in Inverness. However, we are confident that our staff will ensure that the children have as special a time as possible.

Together sessions

Most of the children got together in KLB last week. This was a huge success and enjoyed by staff & children alike. We will continue with these sessions as and when appropriate for the various cohorts of children.

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Head Teacher's Report to Parent Council

November 2021

High School

COVID 19

We continue to take precautions in all the schools to limit the spread of covid-19. These include restrictions on visitors, enhanced hygiene routines and the use of disinfectant and hand sanitiser at entrances and in classrooms. Staff and pupils in the high school and staff in the primaries are still wearing masks in communal areas and when working closely with pupils. Recent events serve as a stark reminder that the virus is not going away and we will emphasise regularly with pupils and staff the need to take these precautions seriously.

Highland Council regularly updates its position statement and any new advice to parents will be posted on all the usual social media outlets and on the website as well as by email or letter home. I appreciate that sometimes this advice can seem contradictory and confusing but we are obliged to follow Council and Government guidance.

I would ask parents to encourage young people who are eligible to have the vaccine if they are able to do so and consent forms have been sent home to all High School pupils under the age of 16 with vaccination in school due in the next few weeks.

SQA:

The SQA are reviewing the exam diet for this year and will publish regular updates as the situation becomes clearer. As things stand at present we expect there to be exams for N5, H and AH subjects this year with some course content removed to take account of later starts and disruption to schooling.

Positive Behaviour:

We had a very enjoyable assembly yesterday where I had the pleasure of handing out a huge number of green cards and commendation certificates recognising effort and achievement in all areas of the school. It was great to see so many of our young people getting well deserved recognition for their hard work, effort and attendance especially after the difficulties of the last two years.

Staffing:

Dr Whitely has now taken up her post as teacher of science and has settled in very well.

Mr Galbraith left us at the end of last term and we are currently advertising for a replacement. Mrs Thackerey is taking English classes in the meantime and we are grateful to her for her flexibility.

Miss Lockhart has also indicated that she will not be returning after her career break and we wish her and Mr Galbraith well in the future. Music will continue to be taught by Ms Richards.

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We also have a post as PT Guidance advertised and we have had several expressions of interest in this post which will allow us to continue to support all our pupils and to meet their needs.

School Improvement Plan and Standards and Qualities report:

These will be published on the school website as soon as possible after scrutiny from our Quality Improvement team in Highland Council.